

# NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DID MILLSTONE NUKE TURN DOWN FREE SECURITY HELP?**

*Markey probes allegation that free nuclear reactor security device was refused*

**Washington, DC:** Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the Homeland Security Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee, the panel which oversees the regulation of nuclear reactors, today released a letter sent to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regarding an allegation received by his office that Dominion Nuclear Connecticut Inc., the licensee of the Millstone nuclear power plant, refused the NRC's offer to install a free device that would greatly enhance security at the facility because it didn't want to assume the maintenance costs.

"I am deeply concerned that this information, if true, reflects a lack of commitment for the security of the power plant on the part of the licensee and a disregard for the health and safety of the nearby communities," said Rep. Markey.

Many nuclear power plants which employ a "once-through" cooling system, including Millstone, Pilgrim and Seabrook, pump in millions of gallons of water per day through water intake structures located on nearby bodies of water. In the case of the Millstone plant, these structures are located on Niantic Bay, an estuary of the Long Island Sound. The water is constantly circulated through complex systems to cool the reactor and maintain the temperature where spent fuel is stored in pools, among other functions.

If an interruption in the flow of water from the intake structures occurs, there would be a serious threat to the safe operation of the facility, and a catastrophic meltdown could ensue. Al Qaeda has long considered U.S. nuclear facilities to be attractive terrorist targets, and a waterborne attack is one method terrorists could use. There is currently no obstacle in place at the Millstone facility water intake structures to impede an attack by, for example, suicidal terrorists who drive a motorboat laden with explosives into the intake structures at the facility.

"We must be vigilant about securing our nuclear facilities – with neglect from plans like

Rep. Markey's office was informed that in 2004, the Commission offered to install a device – at no cost - at the Millstone water intake structures to serve the purpose of impeding and thwarting such a postulated waterborne attack. However, Rep. Markey's office was also informed that the licensee rejected the offer because it did not wish to assume costs to maintain the device.

Rep. Markey's letter requested information regarding:

- Whether the information received regarding the Millstone facility is accurate.
- Whether the Commission has made similar offers to install free security equipment at other similar reactors such as Pilgrim and Seabrook, and if so what the outcome was.
- Whether the Commission has made offers to install other types of security equipment at any other reactors, and if so, what the outcome was.

For a copy of the letter released today, please go to <http://www.house.gov/markey/>

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